

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00932 061930Z
ACTION ARA-06

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P R 061845Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 532
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0932

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ASEC, TED, US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR FAY PUBLICLY AIRS MARINE
SECURITY GUARD ISSUE

REF: STATE 47570

1. IN PROMINENT SECOND-PLACE STORY ON FRONT PAGE APRIL 6, THE TRINIDAD GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: "GOVERNMENT SAYS NO US MARINES IN PORT OF SPAIN." THE ARTICLE THEN REPORTS THAT AMBASSADOR FAY, DURING HIS FAREWELL PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE AIRPORT APRIL 5, STATED THAT THE POSTING OF MARINES AT THE US EMBASSY IN PORT OF SPAIN WAS BLOCKED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. THE AMBASSADOR WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE GOTT GAVE NO REASON FOR BLOCKING THE MARINES AND THAT HIS INABILITY TO HAVE MARINES POSTED "WAS HIS BIGGEST FAILURE AS AMBASSADOR TO THIS COUNTRY." TEXT OF ARTICLE POUCHED TO ARA/CAR.

2. COMMENT: I FEEL THAT IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO PUBLIC ATTENTION HERE. AS LONG AS SUBJECT WAS BEING HANDLED AS PRIVATE DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERN-
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MENTS WE HAD HOPE FOR REASSESSMENT BY THE GOTT AND REVERSAL OF THEIR OPPOSITION IN DUE COURSE. NOW THAT THE MEDIA HAVE PROMINENTLY TAKEN NOTE OF THE FORMAL GOTT POSITION, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY HARD FOR THIS GOVERNMENT TO REVERSE ITSELF AND ACCEDE TO OUR WISHES REGARDING EMPLACEMENT OF MARINE SECURITY GUARDS. TO DO SO NOW IS A QUIET AND UNOBTRUSIVE

MANNER WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE, AND IMMEDIATE JUSTIFICATIONS WILL BE CALLED FOR BY THE PRESS AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AS TO WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAS REVERSED ITSELF. I DON'T SEE THE GOTT TAKING THAT ONE ON.

3. FOR SOME TIME AMBASSADOR FAY HAD TOYED WITH THE PROSPECT OF SOMEHOW BRINGING PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE GOTT ON THIS ISSUE, EITHER THROUGH THE MEDIA OR OPPOSITION POLITICIANS. IT HAS BEEN THE CONSIDERED VIEW OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM THAT GOING PUBLIC WAS NOT A HELPFUL ALTERNATIVE, AND THAT WE COULD HARDEN AND ANGER THE GOTT IN ITS REFUSAL BY TRYING TO MOBILIZE COUNTER PRESSURES IN THE SOCIETY. WHETHER BY DESIGN, OR NOT, HOWEVER, THE ISSUE HAS NOW BEEN CARRIED OUTSIDE GOVERNMENTAL CHANNELS, AND WE MUST DEAL WITH THE ADDED DIMENSION THEREBY CREATED.

4. THE EMBASSY HAD ROUTINELY NOTIFIED THE MEDIA OF THE TIME OF THE AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE, AND REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE PRESENT AT THE AIRPORT. NO FORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE WAS PLANNED, BUT THE AMBASSADOR AGREED TO TALK WITH THE PRESS. THE MSG ISSUE AROSE IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S QUERY AS TO WHAT THE AMBASSADOR'S GREATEST "DISAPPOINTMENT" HAD BEEN. (NOTE: "DISAPPOINTMENT," NOT "FAILURE" AS REPORTED BY THE GUARDIAN.) THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED HIS FAILURE TO WIN ACCEPTANCE FOR A MSG DETACHMENT AS HIS GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT, AND NOTED THAT APPARENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOTT'S REASONS FOR TURNING IT DOWN HAD BEEN "POLITICAL."

5. THROUGH CONTACTS WITH THE TELEVISION MEDIA, PAO SUCCESSFULLY URGED TELEVISION NEWS (TTT) NOT TO USE THE MSG ISSUE IN THEIR COVERAGE, AS LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO THEIR PHOTO FOOTAGE OF THE AMBASSADOR ENTERING HIS PRIVATE AIRCRAFT TO DEPART. HOWEVER, REPORTER TO WHOM AMBASSADOR RESPONDED REGARDING MARINE ASSIGNMENT WAS UNKNOWN TO MISSION, AND IT WAS FELT COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE SUBSEQUENTLY TO HAVE RAISED MATTER WITH HIM. IN ADDITION TO THE MAJOR COVERAGE IN THE GUARDIAN, MORING RADIO NEW BROADCASTS APRIL 6 ALSO PROMINENTLY CARRIED ITEM ON GOTT REFUSAL OF MARINE GUARDS AT US EMBASSY.

6. EMBASSY PLANS VERY LOW KEY RESPONSE TO FOLLOW-UP MEDIA INQUIRIES IN EFFORT NOT TO FEED FURTHER PRESS INTEREST IN THIS MATTER OR STIMULATE GOTT TO REGISTER

ITS OFFICIAL DISPLEASURE. IF PRESSED, WE WILL ACKNOWLEDGE
THAT THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION AND THAT
MSG UNITS ARE A NORMAL COMPONENT OF MOST AMERICAN
EMBASSIES. FURTHER THAN THAT WE WILL SIMPLY MOTE
THAT WE HAVE NO COMMENT ON INFORMAL PERSONAL
REMARKS MADE BY MR. FAY AS HE RETURNED TO
PRIVATE LIFE.
RICH

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